KYRGYZSTAN

RETURN MIGRANTS SURVEY
ROUND 3 - JULY 2024

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)
MOBILITY TRACKING MATRIX (MTM)

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Disclaimer

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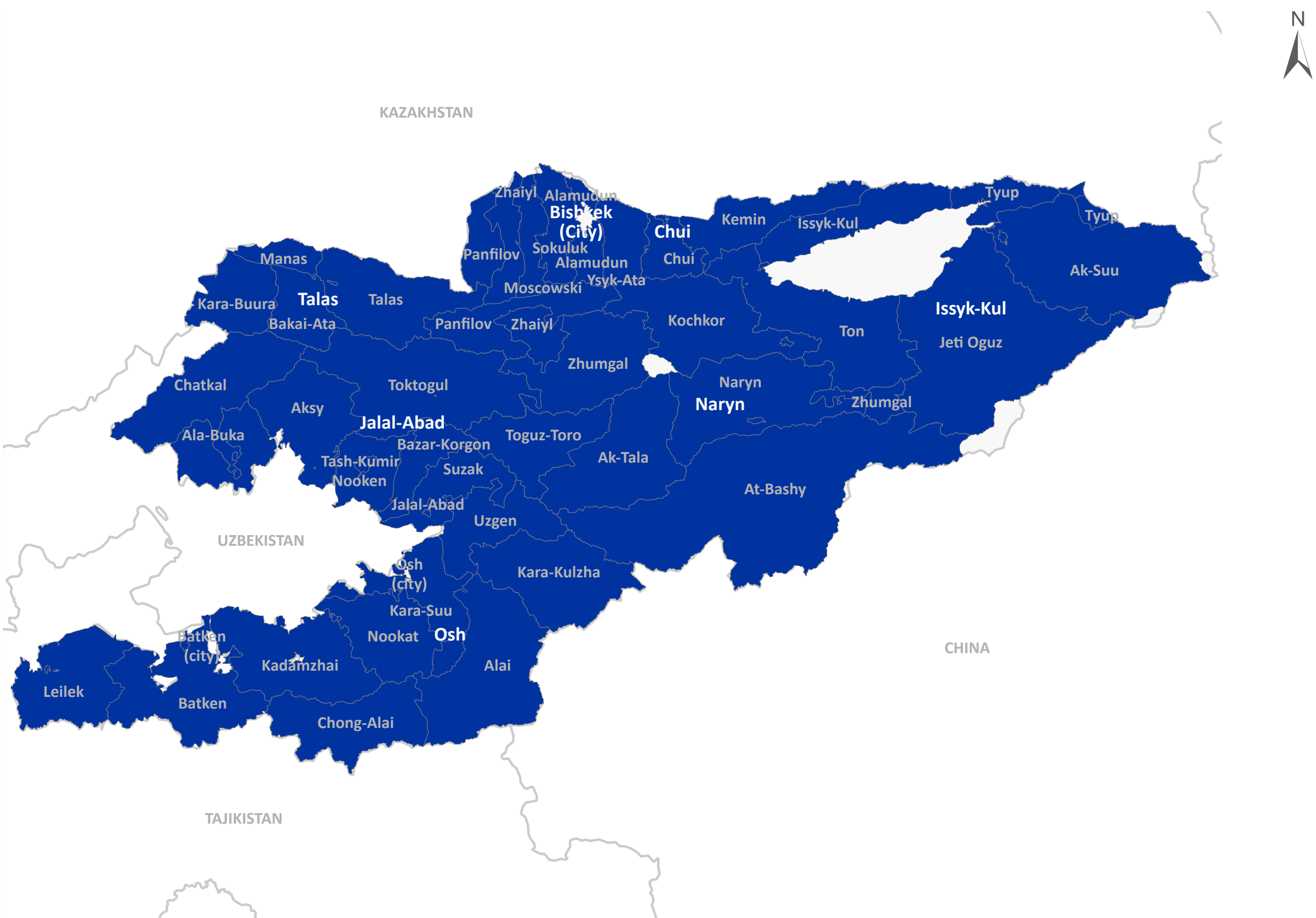
ABOUT MTM

The Mobility Tracking Matrix (MTM) is a system that tracks and monitors population mobility. MTM is adapted to the context in Kyrgyzstan based on IOM's Global Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) methodology[1]. DTM is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process, and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of mobile population groups, whether on-site or en route.

MTM completed its first round of the Return Migrants Survey in December 2022, the second round in December 2023, and the third round in July 2024. MTM enables IOM and its partners to maximize resources, set priorities, and deliver better-targeted, evidence-based, mobility-sensitive, and sustainable humanitarian and development programming.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE



Disclaimer: This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

0 40 80 160 240 320

Regions Covered

1. DTM Methodological framework. Retrieved from: https://dtm.iom.int/about/methodological-framework

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

7 Oblasts
2 cities
covered

1,734
return migrants interviewed

41%
returned migrants with upper secondary education

65%
of the returned migrants live at their own houses

37%
of the returned migrants were the sole providers for their households

79%
of the returned migrants came from the Russian Federation

In the third round of the survey conducted across seven Oblasts and two cities, 1,734 return migrants were interviewed. The key findings reveal significant insights into their circumstances. The majority of return migrants, 79 per cent, came from the Russian Federation. Moreover, 41 per cent of the respondents reported having attained an upper secondary education level, while 37 per cent of the respondents identified themselves as the primary breadwinners for their families. Moreover, a notable portion, 90 per cent, stated they either live in their own or their parents' houses. The majority, 23 per cent of the return migrants, were previously engaged in the construction sector. In addition, 30 per cent of the return migrants indicated that they wanted to permanently stay in Kyrgyzstan without any intended plans for re-migration.

METHODOLOGY

The return migrants survey was conducted using IOM's MTM system in Kyrgyzstan. DTM's Survey methods were implemented for this study.

The Survey locations were selected based on the results of IOM's Baseline Mobility Assessment (BMA) on return migrants. The survey questionnaire was developed based on IOM's similar studies in Central Asia and in consultation with internal and external thematic experts. The questionnaire included questions on socio-economic profile, migration experience, employment, remittances, needs, and vulnerabilities.

The interviews were performed using tablets and the KoBo software. All interviews were anonymous and IOM's Data Protection Principles[2] were observed throughout the entire data cycle. For consistency, the study adopted IOM's definition of a return migrant as outlined in the IOM Glossary[3].

Data collectors approached potential respondents using the snowball method to obtain their informed consent. Data collection was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration (MLSSM) in Kyrgyzstan and its regional offices who extended their technical expertise and staff resources to support the study.

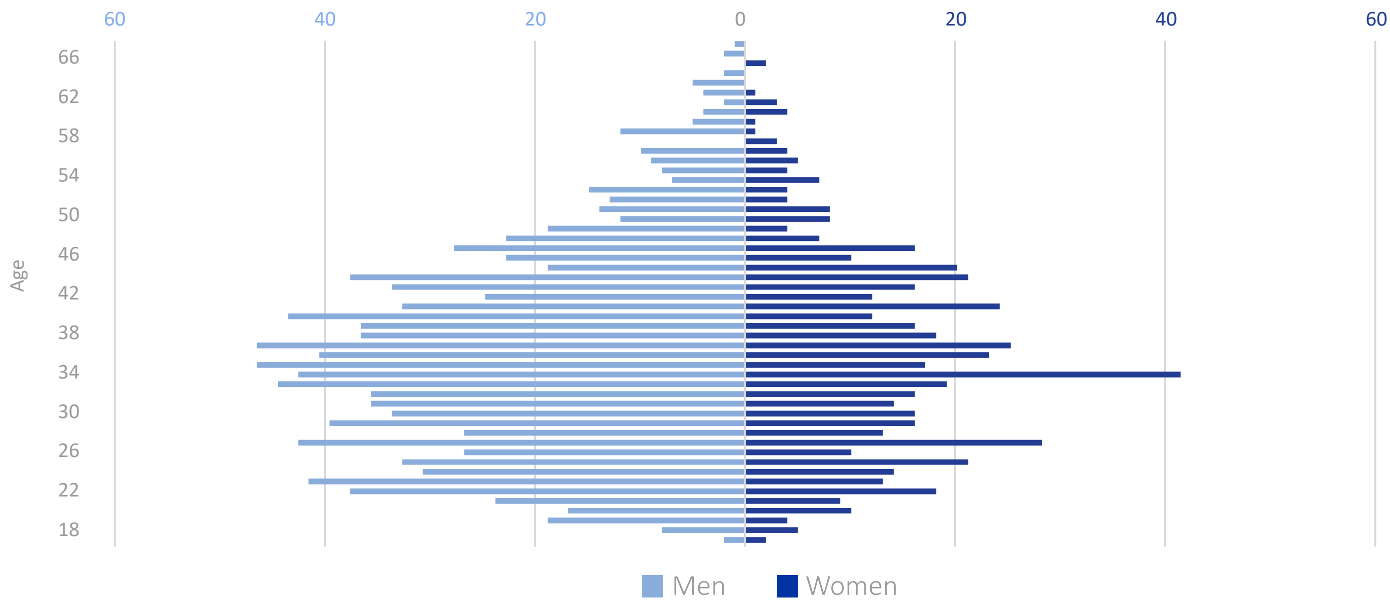
2. IOM Data Protection Principles. Retrieved from: https://www.iom.int/data-protection
3. IOM Glossary. Retrieved from: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RETURN MIGRANTS

Sixty-seven per cent[4] of the surveyed return migrants are males and one-third of the survey participants[4], are females. The average age of the returned migrants is 37 years old. Regarding the age range, 62 per cent of the returned migrants are between 30 and 49 years old. Regarding marital status, 73 per cent of the returned migrants reported being married, while 17 per cent are single, 7 per cent are divorced, and 3 per cent are widowed.

There are more male returned migrants (75%) who are married compared to female migrants (68%). In contrast, among those who are divorced, a higher percentage of female returned migrants (13%) are divorced compared to males (4%). Also, more female respondents are widowed (7%) compared to male (1%). As for the ethnicity of the surveyed returned migrants, 84 per cent are Kyrgyz, 11 per cent are with Uzbek ethnicity and the remaining 5 per cent are Russian, Kazakh, Tajik and others.

SEX AND AGE DISAGGREGATION (ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

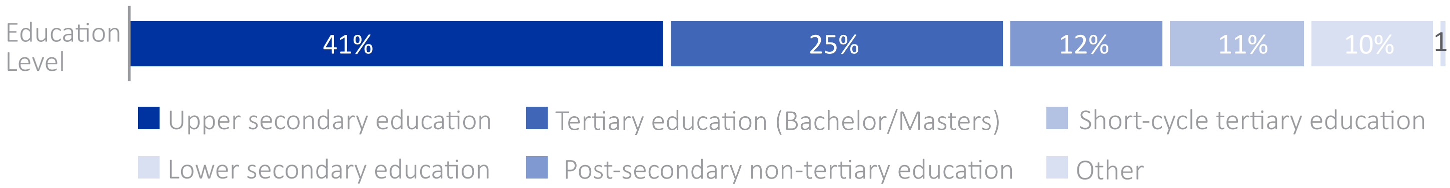


EDUCATION

Forty-one per cent of the returned migrants have attained upper secondary education, while one in four returned migrants (25%) have completed tertiary education, obtaining a bachelor’s or master's degree. Twelve per cent of the returned migrants have short-cycle tertiary education while 11 per cent of the respondents have completed lower secondary education. Ten per cent of the returned migrants have post-secondary non-tertiary education. Less than 1 per cent of the returned migrants had primary education, postgraduate (PHD) degree or no education.

More male return migrants (44%) have upper secondary education compared to female return migrants (35%). However, more female return migrants (36%) have obtained bachelor's or master’s degrees compared to male return migrants (21%).

EDUCATION BACKGROUND BY EDUCATION LEVEL (%)

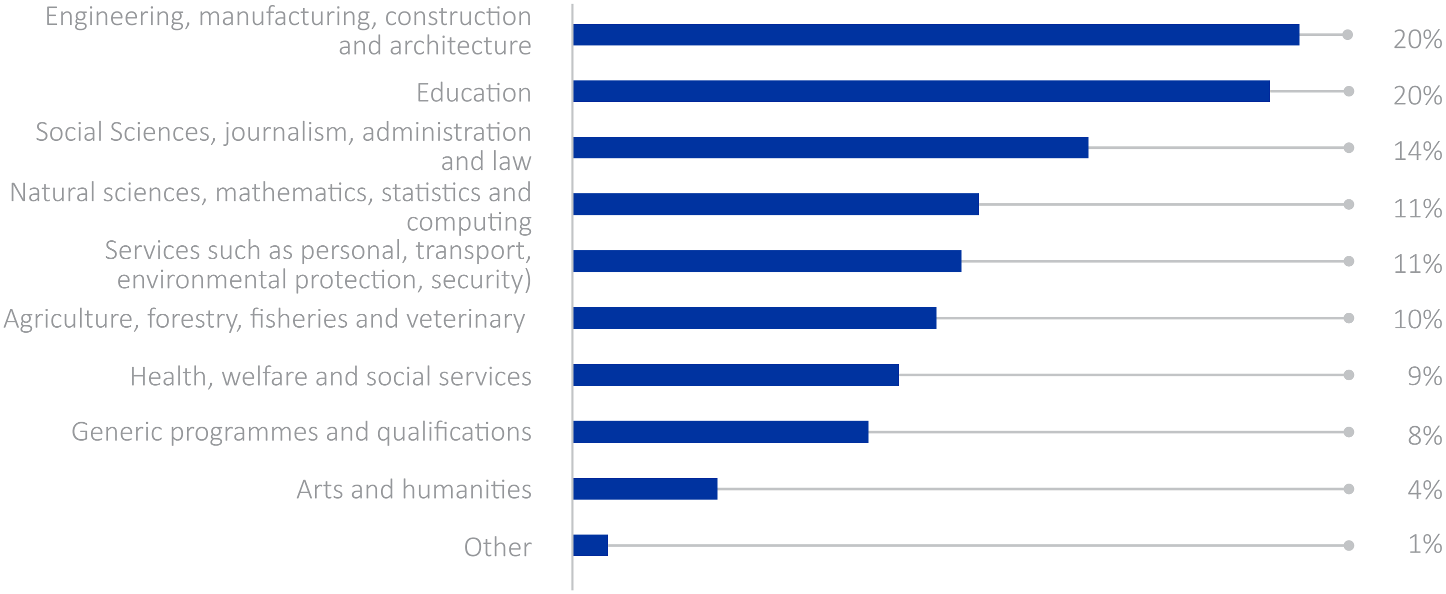


4. Out of the 1,734 surveyed respondents 1,165 (67%) were men and 569 (33%) were women.

As for the field of education, the areas of education of the return migrants[5] include engineering, manufacturing, construction and architecture (20%), education (20%), social sciences, journalism, administration, and law (14%), natural sciences (11%), services such as transport, environmental protection, and security (11%), agriculture (10%), health (9%) , generic programmes (8%), arts and humanities (4%), and other (1%).

Engineering is a more common field of education for male migrants (27%) and education is a more common field for female return migrants (35%).

FIELDS OF EDUCATION (%)[5]

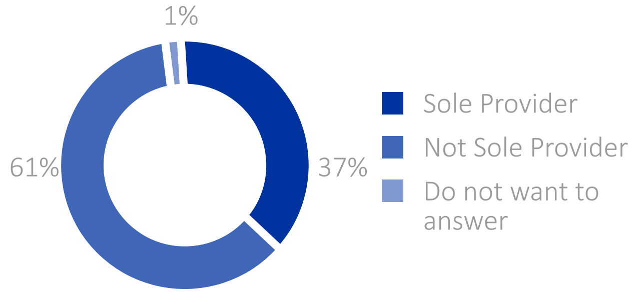


VULNERABILITIES

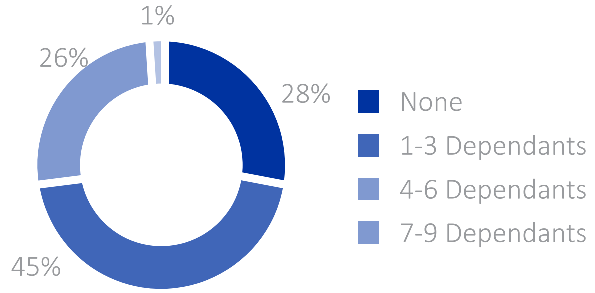
More than one in three respondents (37%) confirmed that they were the primary or sole providers for their households, while 61 per cent indicated otherwise, and the remaining 1 per cent of respondents declined to answer. In terms of the number of dependants at home, 45 per cent reported having one to three dependants, 26 per cent stated they had four to six dependants, only 1 per cent reported having seven to nine dependants and less than 1 per cent indicated having more than nine dependants. Additionally, 28 per cent indicated that they had no dependants at all.

Moreover, 78 per cent of respondents mentioned having children. In general, 91 per cent of children were in Kyrgyzstan with the respondents, 7 per cent were in country of return and the remaining 2 per cent were elsewhere.

SOLE OR MAIN PROVIDER FOR HOUSEHOLD (%)



NUMBER OF DEPENDANTS (%)



5. Only the respondents who had completed tertiary education (including bachelor and master's degrees), post-secondary non-tertiary education, short-cycle tertiary education and postgraduate degrees (845 respondents comprising 49% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about their fields of education.

REASONS FOR RETURN

Over half (52%) of migrants returned to Kyrgyzstan for family-related reasons, such as caring for children or elderly parents, family reunification, or security concerns. Sixteen per cent returned after completing work, contracts, education, or business activities. Seven per cent had to return due to expired documents, including visas, passports, or registration, while 5 per cent cited seasonal work and 4 per cent returned due to health issues. Four per cent came back after losing their jobs, and another 3 per cent cited inadequate income. Two per cent mentioned deportation, 1 per cent returned due to partial mobilization in the Russian Federation, 1 per cent due to economic downturns, 1 per cent because of an inability to find work, and 1 per cent due to security or safety concerns. Two per cent had other reasons, and 1 per cent did not respond.

REASONS FOR RETURN (%)

52%
Family reasons

16%
Completion of work/contract/education/business activities

7%
Document issues (such as end of visa, passport, registration expiration)

5%
Seasonal work

4%
Health reasons

4%
Loss of job

3%
Not enough income

2%
Deportation

2%
Other

1%
Partial mobilization of the Russian Federation

1%
Economic downturn in country of return

1%
Unable to find job

1%
Conflict and general security/personal safety

1%
I do not want to answer

TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF RETURN

A significant majority (79%) of the migrants had returned from the Russian Federation, making it by far the most common country of return. This is followed by Kazakhstan, from which 6 per cent of the migrants had returned, and the Türkiye, which accounted for 5 per cent. The United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea are next, with 2 per cent and 1 per cent of the returns, respectively. In addition to these key countries, there is a diverse range of 32 other nations from which migrants have returned, collectively contributing to the remaining 8 per cent of the total returns. This distribution highlights the broad geographic spread of migration patterns, with the majority of migrants returning from countries that share historical, economic, or labour ties with the region, such as the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan.

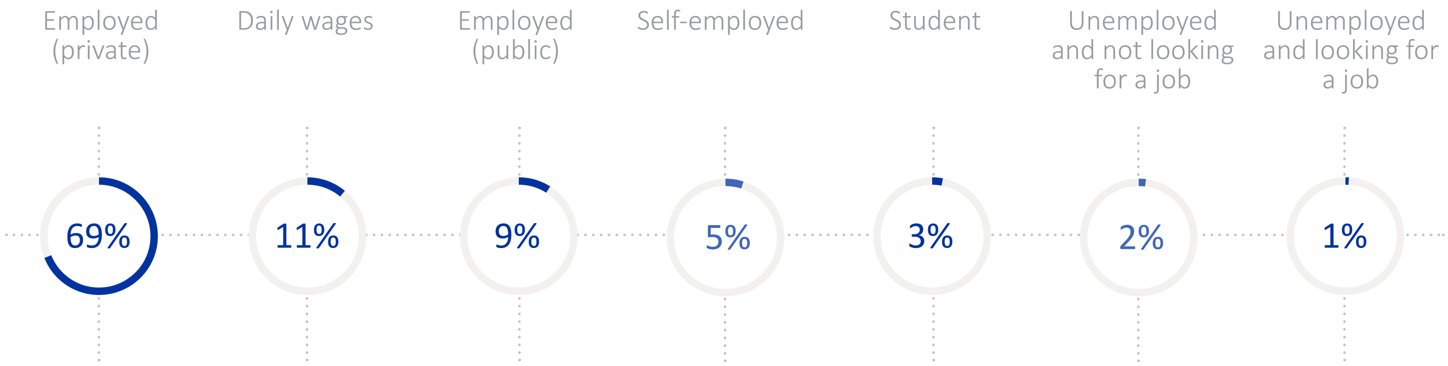
TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN (ABSOLUTE NUMBERS, %)

Number	Country	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Russian Federation	1,370	79%
2	Kazakhstan	100	6%
3	Türkiye	83	5%
4	United Kingdom	27	2%
5	Republic of Korea	18	1%

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE IN COUNTRY OF RETURN

When asked about their employment status in countries of return, 69 per cent of respondents reported being employed in the private sector. Meanwhile, 11 per cent were engaged in daily wage jobs, 9 per cent were employed in the public sector, and 5 per cent were self-employed. Moreover, 2 per cent were unemployed and not seeking work. Three per cent identified as students, 1 per cent were unemployed and looking for a job, and another 1 per cent were retired.

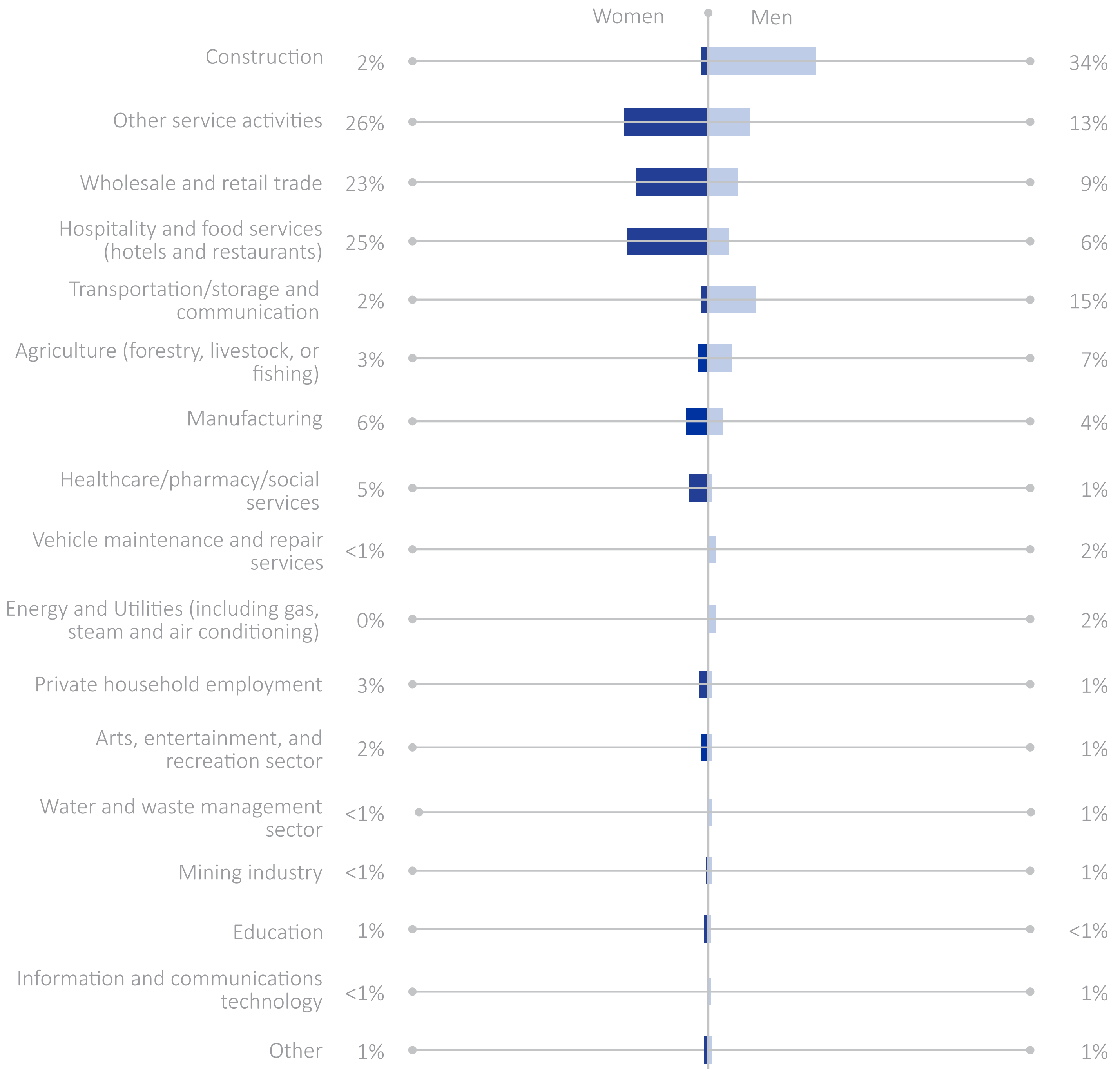
EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN COUNTRY OF RETURN (%)



SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT IN COUNTRIES OF RETURN

The primary sectors of employment[6] in the countries of return were construction (24%), general service activities (17%), wholesale and retail trade (14%), and hospitality and food services (12%). Other sectors included transportation, storage and communication (11%), agriculture (6%), manufacturing (5%), healthcare and social services (2%), and vehicle maintenance and repair services (1%). Additionally, 1 per cent of respondents worked in energy and utility supplies, including gas, steam, and air conditioning, while 1 per cent were employed in private households, the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, water and waste management, mining, and education. Less than 1 per cent worked in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector. The remaining 1 per cent were in other sectors including administrative and support activities, professional, scientific and technical activity, finance and insurance, public administration and operations with immovable property.

SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT IN COUNTRY OF RETURN DISAGGREGATED BY SEX (%)[6]



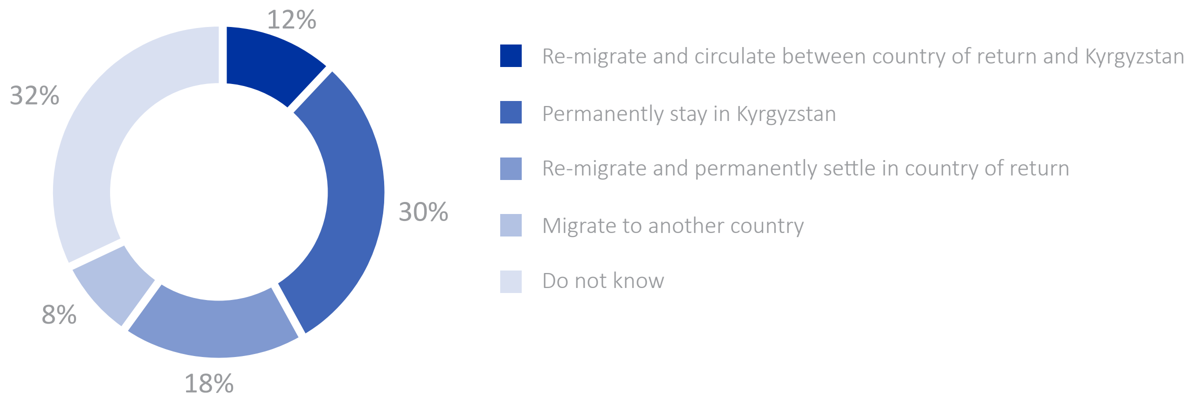
6. Only the respondents who identified their employment status as employed (private), employed (public), daily wages, self-employed in countries of return (1,616 respondents comprising 93% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about their sectors of employment in countries of return.

MIGRATION INTENTIONS

When asked about future migration intentions, the majority of respondents (32%) were unsure about their future migration intentions. Additionally, 30 per cent of respondents indicated an intention to settle permanently in Kyrgyzstan. Meanwhile, 18 per cent of respondents wished to re-migrate and permanently settle in the country of return, 12 per cent intended to circulate between Kyrgyzstan and the country of return, and 8 per cent wanted to migrate to another country.

Compared to the second round survey findings (conducted from October to December 2023), there has been a 30 per cent decrease (from 16% to 32%) in respondents who want to permanently stay in Kyrgyzstan, as well as a 125 per cent increase (from 8% to 18%) in those who intend to re-migrate and permanently settle in countries of return. Moreover, there has been a 47 per cent decrease (from 15% to 8%) in respondents who want to migrate to another country and a 29 per cent decrease (from 17% to 12%) in respondents who want to circulate between Kyrgyzstan and the country of return.

MIGRATION INTENTIONS (%)



Among the 38 per cent of respondents[7] who intended to re-migrate and permanently settle in the country of return, re-migrate and circulate between Kyrgyzstan and country of return, and migrate to another country, their anticipated timelines varied. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents planned to leave Kyrgyzstan in one to three months, while 21 per cent were uncertain about their anticipated timeline of migration. Additionally, 15 per cent planned to leave in less than a month, and 12 per cent anticipated migrating in four to six months. Only a small fraction, 7 per cent, anticipated leaving after a year and the remaining 5 per cent anticipated leaving Kyrgyzstan in seven to 12 months.

Among the same category of return migrants[7] who expressed an intention to re-migrate and permanently settle in the country of return, re-migrate and circulate between Kyrgyzstan and the country of return, and migrate to a different country, the reasons for migration/re-migration from Kyrgyzstan varied. The primary reason for their intended migration/re-migration was availability of higher income (24%) at the country of intended destination, followed by lack of livelihood opportunities in Kyrgyzstan (20%), insufficiency of income earned in Kyrgyzstan to meet family's needs (20%), financial problems/debts (12%), no economic growth or prosperity at the country level in Kyrgyzstan (6%), availability of seasonal work in country of destination (5%), joining family or friends abroad (3%), to obtain a foreign citizenship (3%), poor quality of education in Kyrgyzstan (2%), climate change impacts in Kyrgyzstan (1%), and other reasons (3%).

7. Only the respondents who intended to re-migrate and permanently settle in the country of return, re-migrate and circulate between Kyrgyzstan and country of return, and migrate to another country (659 individuals comprising 38% of the surveyed respondents) were asked to provide information about their anticipated timeline of re-migration and reasons for re-migration.

REASONS FOR LEAVING KYRGYZSTAN

Beyond employment-related factors, various other motivations underpin individuals' mobility. The survey explored these additional reasons[8], encompassing education, family-related issues, tourism, and health reasons. The majority of return migrants (93%) confirmed initially leaving their home for employment purposes, while 7 per cent[8] cited non-employment-related reasons.

Further examination revealed that among these respondents[8], the reasons for leaving Kyrgyzstan were education (49%), visiting/reuniting with family and friends (24%), tourism (21%), other family-related issues (11%), health problems (11%), not having access to agricultural land to work in Kyrgyzstan (5%), and to sell and buy things at the country of destination (3%). Three pre cent did not want to answer the question and an additional 3 per cent had other reasons. The remaining reasons included leaving Kyrgyzstan for reasons such as marriage (1%), climate change (1%), and severe food and water insecurity (1%).

REASONS FOR LEAVING KYRGYZSTAN IF NOT EMPLOYMENT (%)[8]

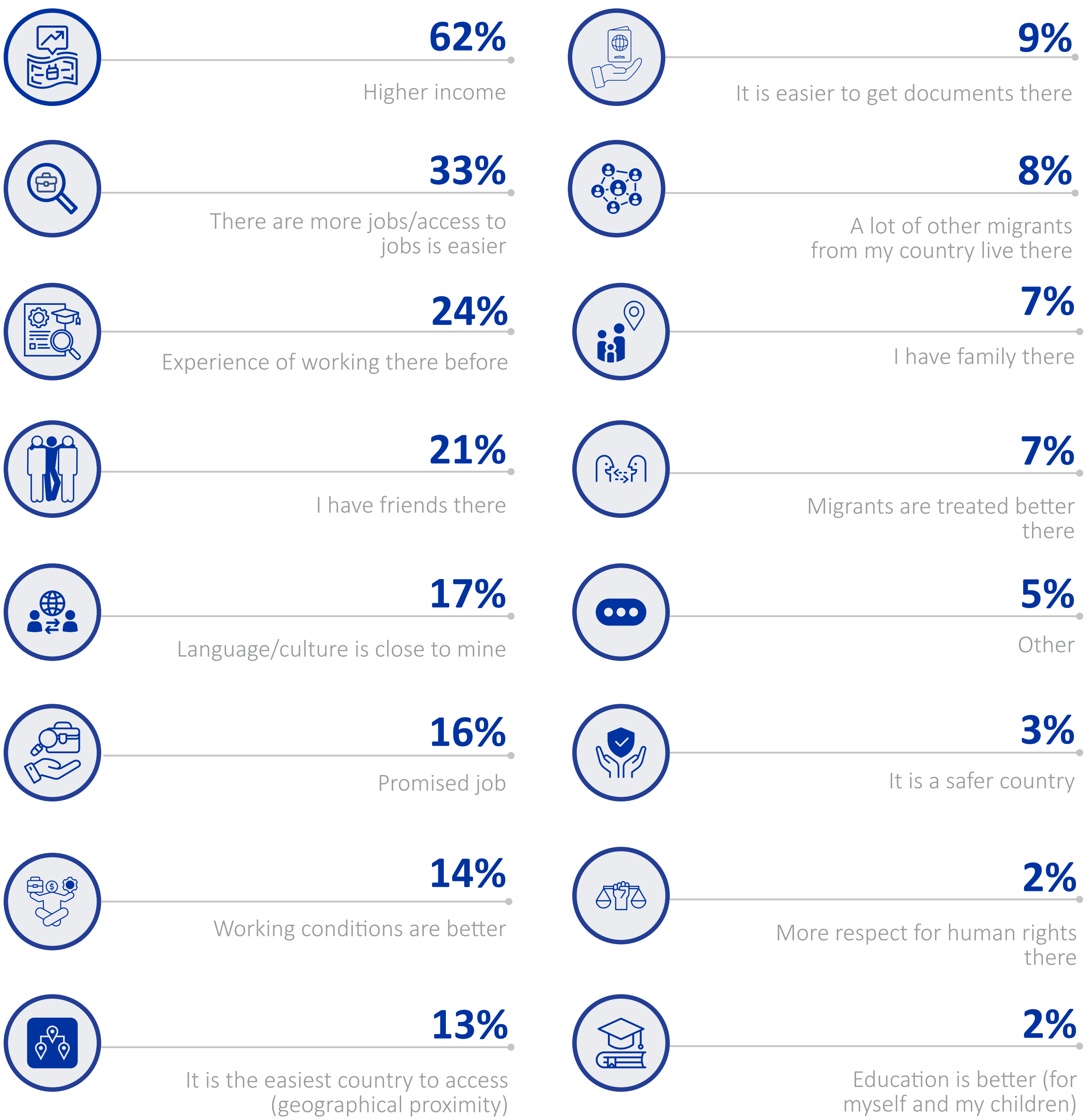
49% Education	**3%** To sell/buy things
24% To visit/reunite with family/friends	**3%** I do not want to answer
21% Tourism	**2%** Other
11% Family problems	**1%** For marriage
11% Health problems	**1%** Food/water insecurity
5% Not owning agricultural land to work in Kyrgyzstan	**1%** Climate change

8. Only the respondents who confirmed leaving Kyrgyzstan for non-employment related purposes (115 respondents comprising 7% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about other reasons for migration.

REASONS TO INITIALLY CHOOSE THE COUNTRY OF RETURN FOR LABOUR MIGRATION

The primary drivers[9] behind labour migration to the country of return were closely tied to economic factors, with higher incomes being the leading motivation for 62 per cent of respondents. Easier access to jobs ranked second, influencing 33 per cent of respondents, while 24 per cent cited having the experience of working in the same country before as a significant factor. Additionally, 21 per cent mentioned having friends in the country of return as a reason, 17 per cent emphasized language and cultural considerations, and 16 per cent mentioned they were promised a job. Other notable reasons included better working conditions (14%), geographical proximity (13%), and ease of documentation (9%). Presence of other migrants from respondents' country of origin (8%), presence of family members (7%), better treatment of migrants (7%), safety (3%), respect for human rights (2%), and educational opportunities (2%) also played minor but influential roles. However, 5 per cent had other reasons.

REASONS TO INITIALLY CHOOSE THE COUNTRY OF RETURN FOR LABOUR MIGRATION (%)[9]

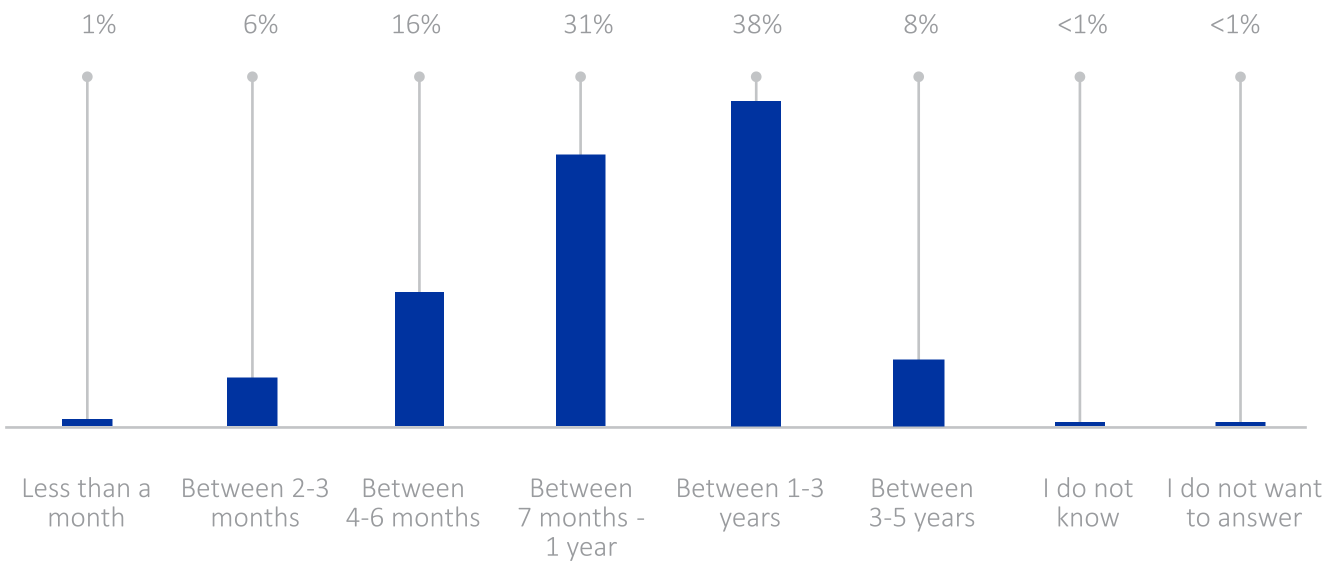


9. Only the respondents who confirmed initially leaving their home countries for employment related purposes (1,614 respondents comprising 93% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about the factors for choosing the country of destination (the country where they worked and returned from) for labour migration.

LENGTH OF TIME AWAY FROM KYRGYZSTAN

The data highlights key trends regarding the duration of stay for return migrants in the countries of return, illustrating that the majority typically stay for seven months to three years. Specifically, 38 per cent of return migrants reported stays between one to three years. Another 31 per cent stayed for periods ranging from seven months to one year. A smaller group, 16 per cent, stayed between four and six months, while 8 per cent reported stays lasting between three to five years. A noteworthy 6 per cent of respondents stayed outside Kyrgyzstan for two to three months. Only 1 per cent of return migrants reported stays of less than a month.

LENGTH OF ACTUAL TIME AWAY FROM HOME COUNTRY (%)



When asked whether their actual length of stay aligned with their initial expectations, almost half of the respondents (47%) confirmed that the time they spent in migration was consistent with what they had anticipated. On the other hand, 31 per cent of the return migrants indicated that their actual stay did not match their expectations. Additionally, 12 per cent of respondents mentioned that they did not remember what their initial expectations were, and another 10 per cent reported that they did not know how long they had originally expected to stay. These latter responses might reflect a level of uncertainty or ambiguity in their initial plans.

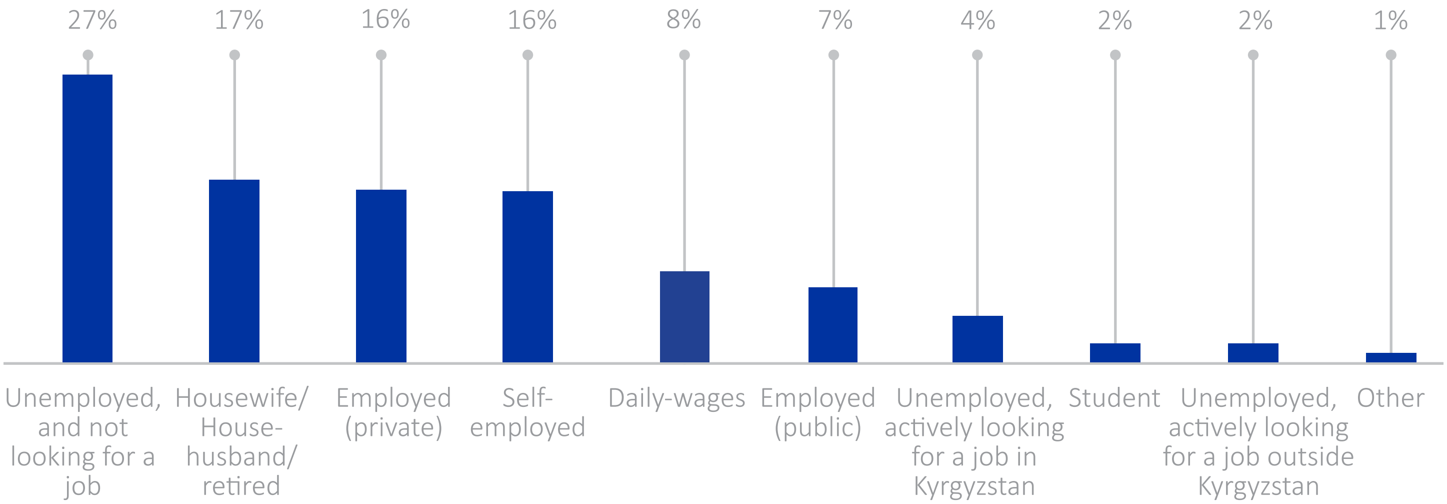
Delving deeper into the experiences of the 31 per cent whose expectations diverged from their actual stays, 23 per cent had initially planned to stay shorter, while the remaining 8 per cent had expected to stay longer than their actual stays abroad. This suggests, for some, circumstances may have changed, leading to an extended or shortened stay beyond what was initially anticipated.

These data provide valuable insights into the migration patterns of return migrants in Kyrgyzstan, emphasizing that a significant majority tend to stay for relatively long durations, primarily between seven months and three years. Furthermore, the analysis of migrants' expectations versus their actual experiences sheds light on the broader challenges that return migrants may face in terms of uncertainty, changing conditions, or unmet expectations.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT IN KYRGYZSTAN

At the time of the survey, the majority (27%) of return migrants were unemployed and not looking for a job and 17 per cent were housewife/house-husband or retired. Twenty-three per cent were either employed in the public or private sectors, 16 per cent were self-employed, 8 per cent were working as daily-wage workers, 4 per cent were unemployed and actively looking for jobs in Kyrgyzstan, while 2 per cent were unemployed and actively looking for jobs outside Kyrgyzstan, 2 per cent were students and the remaining 1 per cent were either interns or volunteers.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS (%)

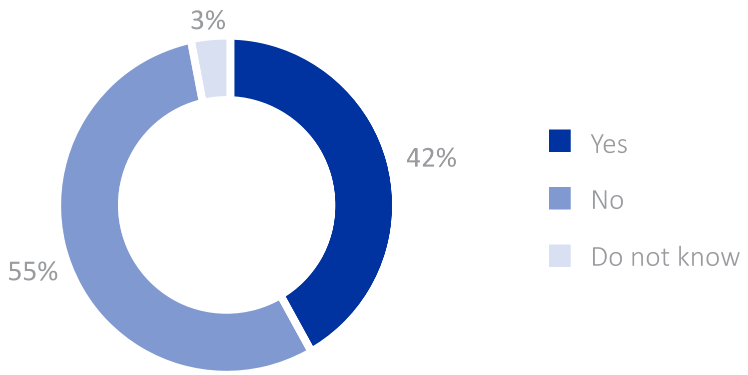


CURRENT EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS IN KYRGYZSTAN

The 47 per cent of respondents[10] who were employed in the public or private sectors, daily-wage workers or self-employed were asked about the modality of their work. Among them, 64 per cent of respondents were working full-time, while 27 per cent were employed part-time. Another 5 per cent reported being forced to work part-time due to the unavailability of full-time positions, and the remaining 4 per cent had flexible working arrangements or were working on farms. The same category of respondents[10] were asked to provide information about their occupation types. Among them, 47 per cent identified themselves as employees, 37 per cent as independent workers without being employees, 11 per cent as dependent contractors, 5 per cent as employers.

The group of respondents who identified as employees[11] were asked about the nature of their employment contracts. More than half (51%) reported working without a contract, 48 per cent had an official written contract, and 1 per cent declined to answer. Further analysis showed that among these respondents[11], 42 per cent stated that their employers contributed to a pension fund, while 55 per cent reported no such contributions, and 3 per cent did not know.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PENSION FUND (%)[11]



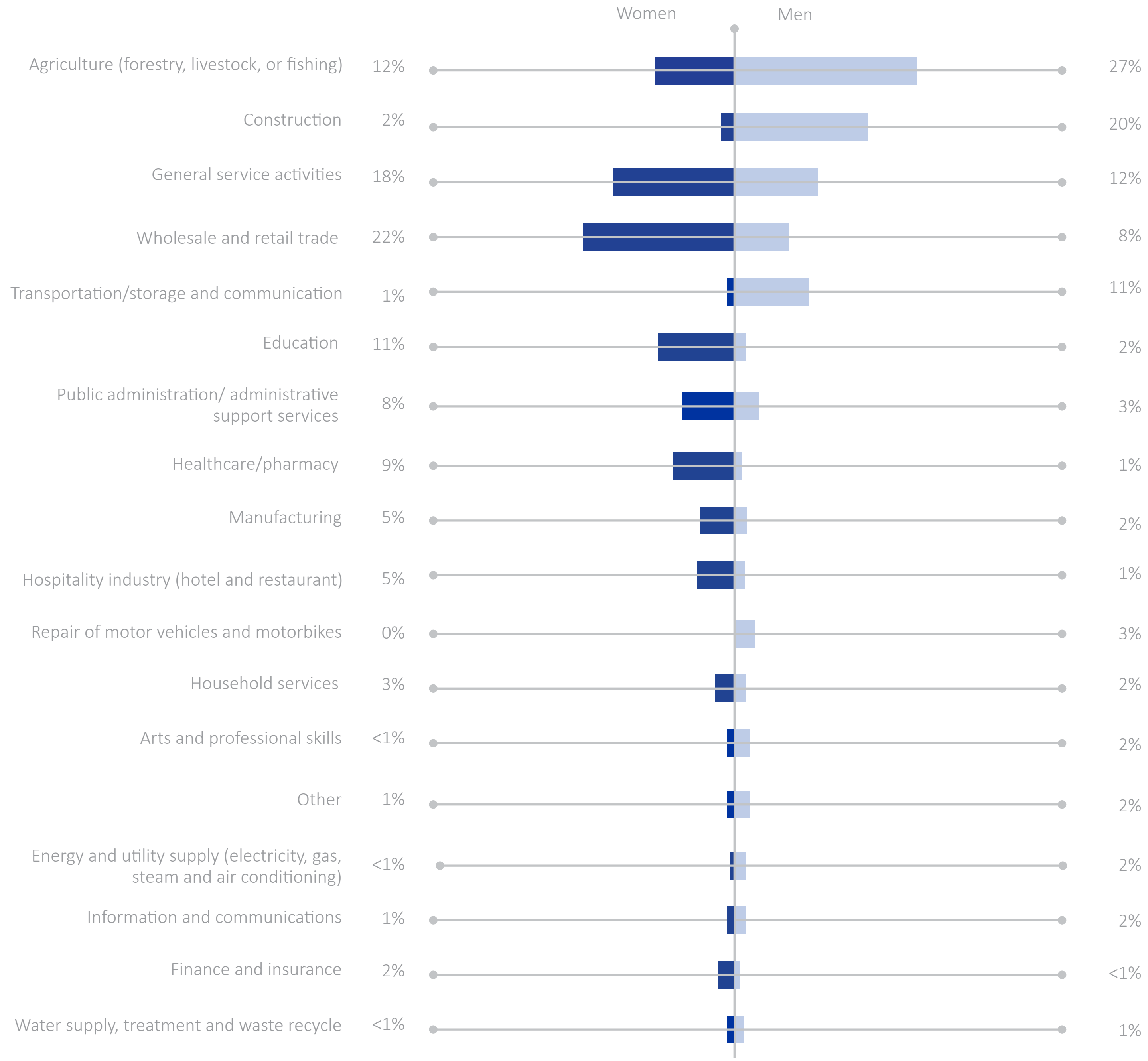
10. Only the respondents who identified their current employment status as employed (private), employed (public), daily wages, and self-employed (820 respondents comprising 47% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide follow up information about their current employment conditions.
11. Only the respondents who identified their current employment position as employee (386 respondents comprising 22% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide follow up information about their contract type.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IN KYRGYZSTAN

The primary sectors of current employment[12] included agriculture (23%), followed by construction (15%), general service activities (14%), wholesale and retail trade (12%), transportation (8%), education (4%), public administration and administrative support services (4%), healthcare services (3%), manufacturing (3%), hospitality industry including hotel and restaurants (2%), repair of motor vehicles and motorbikes (2%), household services (2%), arts and professional skills (2%) and other sectors.

Among male respondents, the majority worked in the agriculture sector (27%), followed by construction (20%), general service activities (12%), transportation/storage and communication (11%), and wholesale and retail trade (8%). In contrast, female respondents were primarily employed in wholesale and retail trade (22%), followed by general service activities (18%), agriculture (12%), education (11%), healthcare services (9%), and public administration and administrative support services (8%).

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SECTORS DISAGGREGATED BY SEX (%)[12]

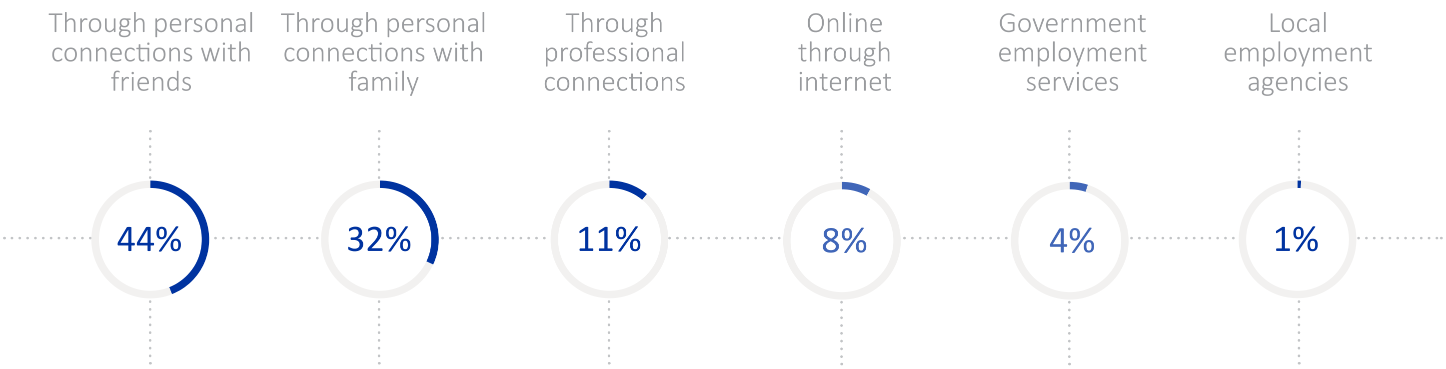


12. Only the respondents who identified their current employment status as employed (private), employed (public), daily wages, and self-employed (820 respondents comprising 47% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about their current employment sectors.

WAYS OF FINDING THE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT IN KYRGYZSTAN

When asked how the employed return migrants secured their current jobs[13], the majority of the respondents reported finding employment through personal connections with friends (44%), and family (32%). This was followed by the respondents who found their employments through professional connections (11%), online through the internet (8%), government employment services (4%), and local employment agencies (1%).

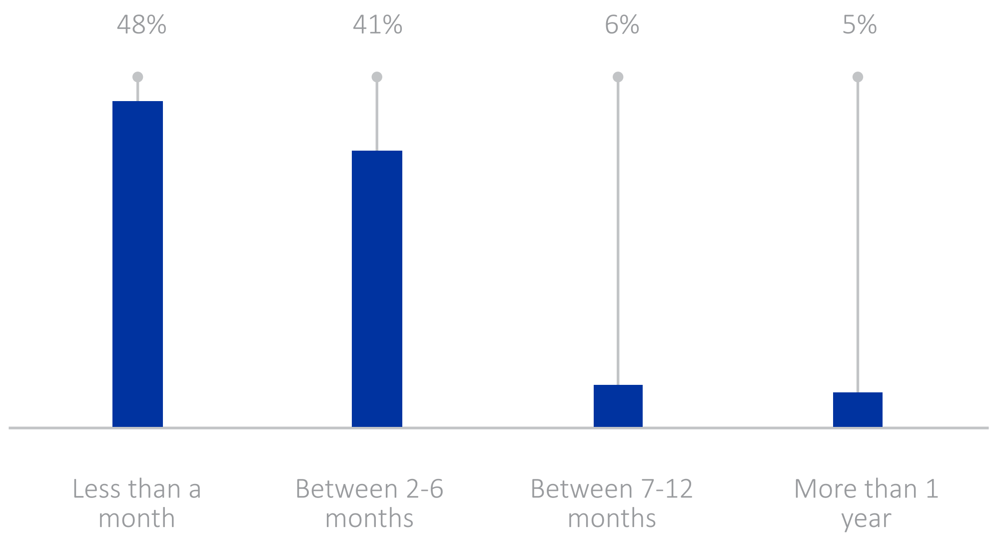
WAYS OF FINDING CURRENT EMPLOYMENT (%)[13]



LENGTH OF TIME TO FIND EMPLOYMENT AMONG EMPLOYED RETURN MIGRANTS IN KYRGYZSTAN

Further clarifications were sought on how quickly the employed return migrants[13] secured their current jobs after return to Kyrgyzstan. The findings revealed that nearly half of the employed respondents (48%) found employment within the first month of their return. An additional 41 per cent of the respondents secured jobs within two to six months after return. A smaller group, 6 per cent found employment between seven and twelve months after their return and the remaining 5 per cent took over a year after their return to Kyrgyzstan to re-enter the workforce.

LENGTH OF TIME TO FIND EMPLOYMENT AMONG EMPLOYED RETURN MIGRANTS IN KYRGYZSTAN (%)[13]



13. Only the respondents who identified their current employment status as employed (private), employed (public), daily wages, self-employed (820 respondents comprising 47% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about ways and length of time spent to find their current employment.

CHALLENGES FACED WHILE WORKING IN KYRGYZSTAN

When asked about the challenges faced while working in Kyrgyzstan[14], 42 per cent of respondents reported experiencing no challenges at all. Among those who identified difficulties, the most frequently mentioned issues included longer working hours than specified in contracts (17%), lower actual salaries compared to what was contracted (13%), bureaucratic hurdles (8%), conditions outlined in the contracts not matching the actual working conditions (8%), and not enough income (7%).

Other challenges highlighted by respondents included a mismatch between their skills and job requirements (5%), health deterioration due to difficult work conditions (3%), difficulties integrating into the local community (1%), a lack of foreign language skills (1%), and experiencing workplace discrimination or abuse based on gender, race, or age (1%). Less than 1 per cent of respondents were unaware of any support options available for cases of abuse, violence, or exploitation by employers, and 12 per cent selected other options to describe their challenges.

CHALLENGES FACED WHILE WORKING (%)[14]

42% No challenges

17% Actual longer working hours compared to contract

13% Actual lower salary compared to the amount in the contract

8% Bureaucracy

8% contract conditions do not match with actual work conditions

7% Not enough income

5% Skills do not match the work

5% Do not want to answer

4% Other

3% Health deterioration due to difficult work conditions

1% Difficulties integrating in the local community

1% Lack of foreign language skills

<1% Do not know any source to receive support in case of abuse, violence or exploitation from the employer

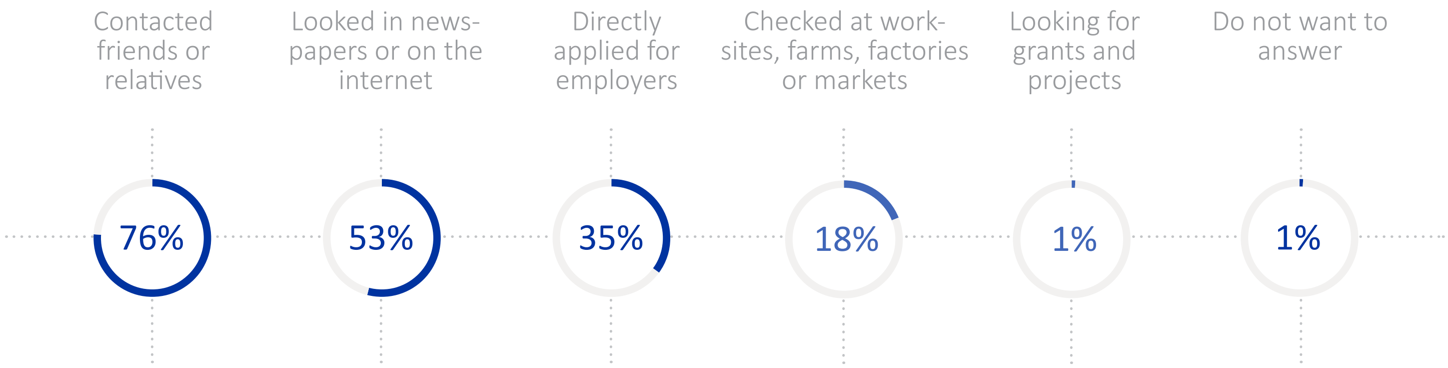
1% Experienced workplace discrimination/ abuse (gender, race, age)

14. Only the respondents who identified their current employment status as employed (private), employed (public), daily wages, self-employed (820 respondents comprising 47% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about the challenges they faced while working in Kyrgyzstan.

EMPLOYMENT-SEEKING STRATEGIES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED RETURN MIGRANTS IN KYRGYZSTAN

When asked how unemployed return migrants[15] seek employment, the following methods were reported: 76 per cent of respondents indicated that they contact friends or relatives, 53 per cent look in newspapers or online, 35 per cent apply directly to employers, and 18 per cent check at work-sites, farms, factories, or markets. Additionally, 1 per cent seek grants and projects, while another 1 per cent declined to answer. These percentages reflect the various approaches respondents used to seek employment, with individuals able to select multiple options.

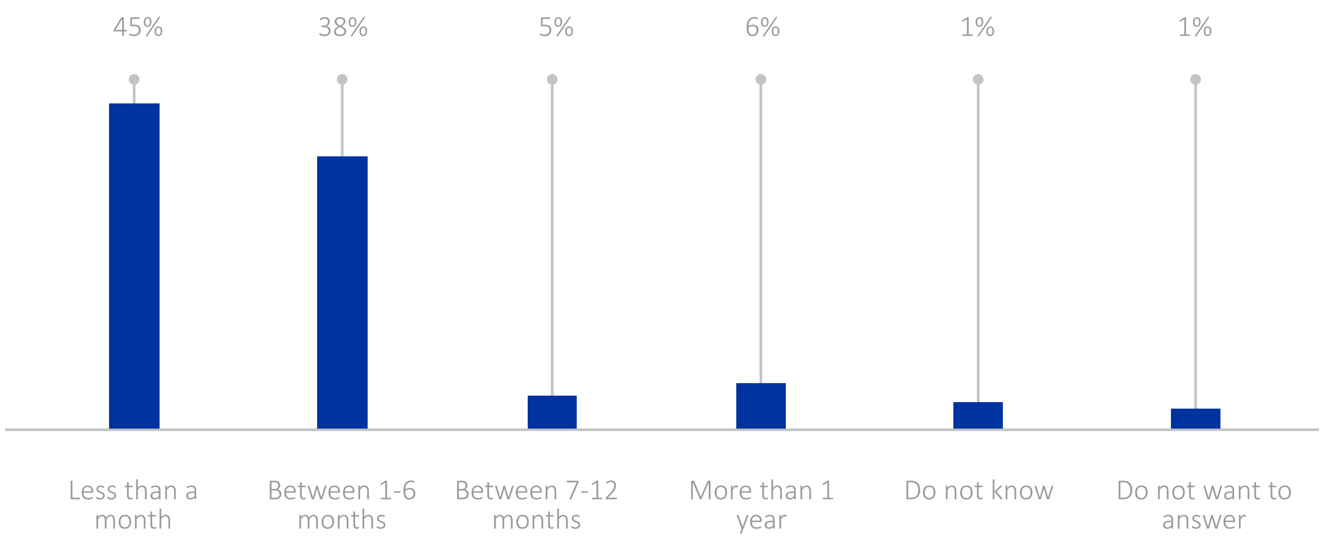
EMPLOYMENT-SEEKING STRATEGIES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED (%)[15]



LENGTH OF TIME SPENT TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED

Further clarifications were sought on when the unemployed return migrants[15] started looking for employment. The findings revealed that nearly half of the employed respondents (45%) have been looking for employment for less than a month. An additional 38 per cent of respondents have been looking for employment between seven months to a year, while 6 per cent of the respondents have been looking for employment for more than a year. The remaining 2 per cent of respondents either did not know or did not want to answer.

LENGTH OF TIME SPENT SEEKING EMPLOYMENT AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED (%)[15]



15. Only the respondents who identified their current employment status as unemployed and actively looking for employment in Kyrgyzstan or outside Kyrgyzstan and apprentice/interns (109 respondents comprising 6% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about ways and length of time spent to find their current employment.

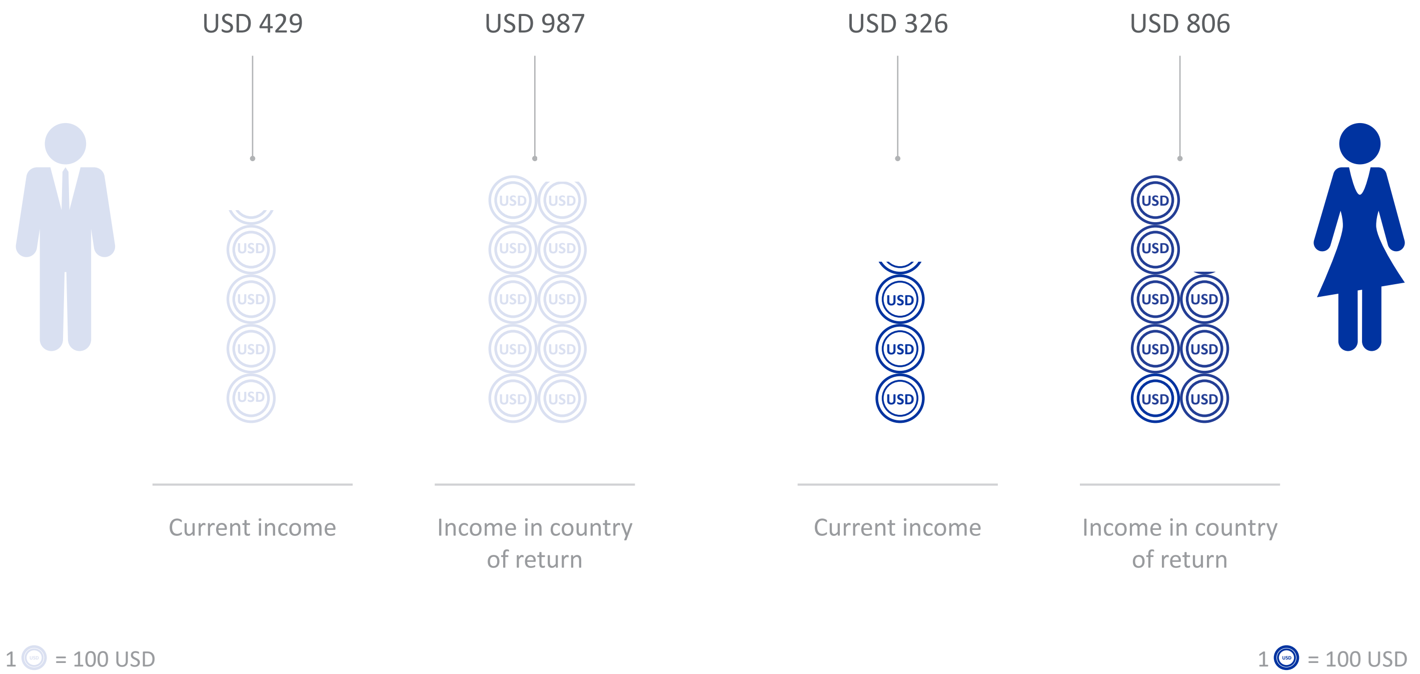
INCOME

The current average personal income of return migrants[16] in Kyrgyzstan is approximately United States Dollar (USD) 400 per month. However, there is a noticeable gender disparity in earnings, with female return migrants earning significantly less than their male counterparts. On average, men report a monthly income of 429 USD, while women earn an average of 326 USD.

In general, the income of return migrants has drastically decreased since their return to Kyrgyzstan. While working abroad, return migrants earned more than double their current income. On average, they were earning USD 929 in their countries of return, compared to the USD 400 they now make.

This trend holds true for both male and female return migrants. Female workers earned an average of USD 806 while abroad, which has dropped to USD 326 since their return. Similarly, male workers' income has declined from USD 987 in their countries of return to USD 429 after returning home.

AVERAGE CURRENT INCOME[16] VERSUS INCOME IN COUNTRIES OF RETURN BY SEX (ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)



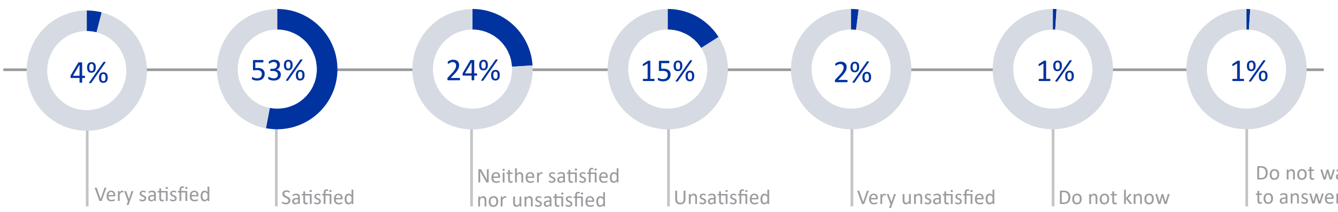
In terms of financial well-being, 44 per cent of respondents stated that while they could afford necessary purchases, they were unable to save money. This implies that many return migrants live pay-check to pay-check, managing to cover their immediate needs but lacking the ability to save for future expenses or emergencies. An additional 21 per cent reported their income only covered essential expenses with no room for additional financial flexibility. This is particularly concerning as it limits their ability to handle unexpected expenses, such as medical emergencies or job loss.

However, 17 per cent of respondents reported being able to meet their needs and also maintain some savings, suggesting a level of financial stability that allows for both consumption and saving. Moreover, 9 per cent of respondents mentioned not having a personal income and an additional 8 per cent of the respondents mentioned that their income was not enough to afford necessary purchases and the remaining 1 per cent declined to provide an answer.

16. Only the respondents who identified their current employment status as employed (private), employed (public), daily wages, self-employed (820 respondents comprising 47% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about their current income in Kyrgyzstan.

When assessing the level of economic satisfaction among respondents, over half of the respondents, 57 per cent, expressed contentment with their current financial situation. This indicates that for most individuals, their income and employment conditions are meeting their expectations. However, despite this overall positive sentiment, a smaller but significant minority, 17 per cent, reported being dissatisfied with their financial circumstances. The dissatisfaction within this group stems from various economic challenges, including low income, unemployment, debts, and difficulties in finding jobs that matched their skills and educational background.

SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION (%)

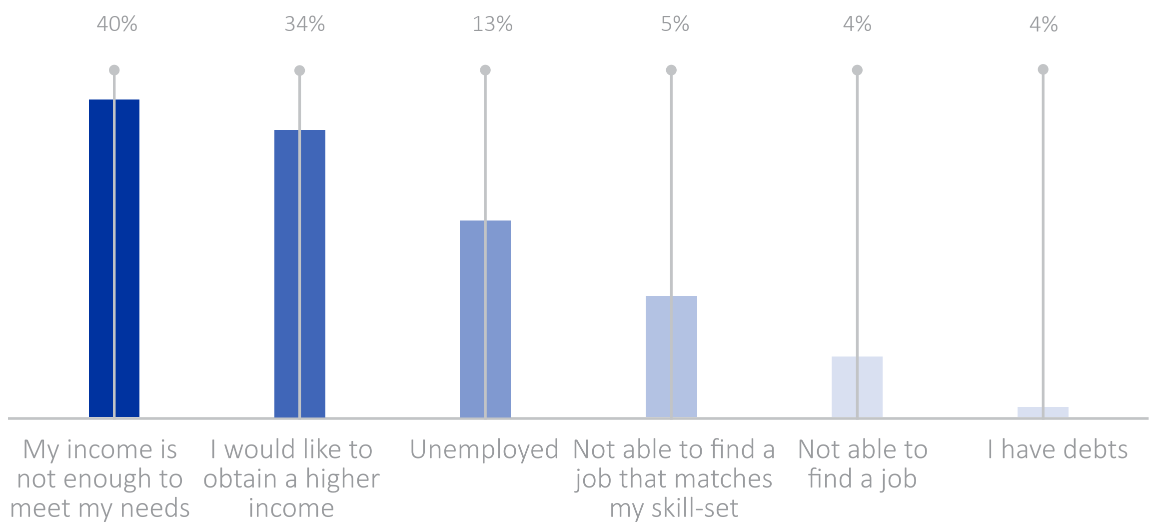


For those who expressed dissatisfaction[17], their concerns were often linked to income insufficiency. Specifically, 40 per cent of dissatisfied respondents reported that their current earnings were insufficient to cover basic necessities such as food, housing, and healthcare. This reinforces the idea that a significant portion of the population may be living pay-check to pay-check, unable to accumulate savings or enjoy a cushion for unexpected expenses. Additionally, 34 per cent of this group cited the need for a higher income, indicating that despite being employed, they felt their earnings were inadequate to provide financial security or to meet personal and family needs.

Among the unsatisfied[12] respondents, 13 per cent were unemployed, a notable figure that points to persistent issues with job availability and employment opportunities. Another critical issue raised by 5 per cent of the dissatisfied respondents was the inability to find employment that aligned with their skills or educational background. Moreover, another 4 per cent of respondents in this group expressed difficulty finding any job at all.

In addition to the challenges of unemployment and job mismatches, 4 per cent of dissatisfied respondents reported being burdened by significant debt. While this may seem like a small figure, it reflects the growing concern about personal debt levels, which can exacerbate financial insecurity.

REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION (AMONG THOSE WHO REPORTED BEING DISSATISFIED) (%)[17]

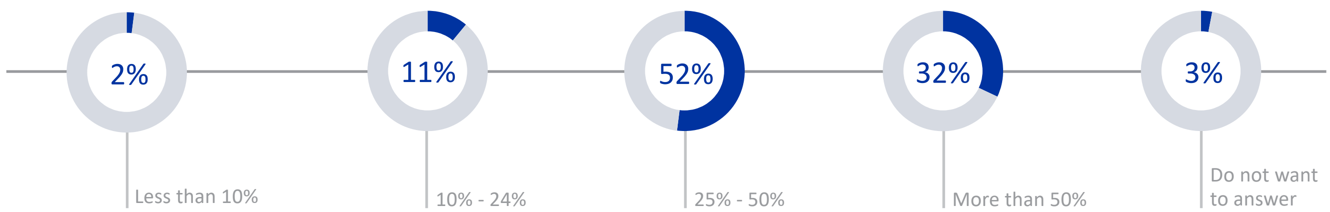


17. Only the respondents who answered being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied about their current economic situation (296 respondents comprising 17% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about the reasons for their dissatisfaction.

REMITTANCES

Remittances were a primary source of income for the families of nearly half (46%) of return migrants. While abroad, 76 per cent[18] of these migrants regularly sent money home. When asked about the percentage of income remitted, 52 per cent of return migrants sent between 25 per cent to 50 per cent of their monthly income, while 32 per cent remitted more than half of their income. Another 11 per cent sent between 10 per cent to 25 per cent, 3 per cent declined to answer, and 2 per cent sent less than 10 per cent of their monthly income.

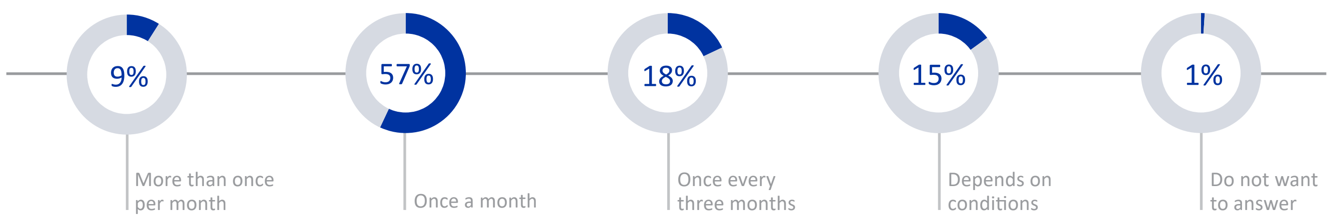
RANGES OF MONTHLY INCOME REMITTED (%)[18]



FREQUENCY, METHODS AND REASONS FOR SENDING MONEY BACK HOME (%)

Among the respondents who sent remittances[18], 57 per cent did so monthly, 18 per cent did so every three months, 15 per cent based their remitting on the needs at home and their income, 9 per cent sent money several times a month, and 1 per cent chose not to disclose their frequency.

FREQUENCY OF SENDING MONEY BACK HOME (%)[18]



When it comes to methods used to send money back home while abroad, 25 per cent of return migrants reported preferring bank websites or banking mobile applications, while another 25 per cent relied on in-person money transfer operators like Western Union offices. Additionally, 21 per cent used the online services of money transfer operators like Western Union, 16 per cent conducted online transactions through friends or relatives, and 8 per cent visited bank offices in person. Smaller percentages used other methods including the 2 per cent of respondents who sent cash through friends or relatives, 1 per cent carried cash home themselves, 1 per cent paid someone to transport cash, 1 per cent used a middleman, and 1 per cent did not want to answer.

When asked why they had chosen their preferred method for sending money, 34 per cent of respondents cited safety as the main reason. Another 22 per cent prioritized convenience, while 16 per cent selected their method based on the preferences of family or friends back home. Speed was a key factor for 14 per cent, who opted for the fastest option available, 8 per cent chose the most cost-effective method, 4 per cent used their method out of habit, and 1 per cent declined to answer.

When asked about the primary reasons[18] for sending money home, in 91 per cent of cases, the primary reason was to support family or friends in covering basic expenses such as food, clothing, and shelter. Additionally, 50 per cent of remittances went toward education expenses, 41 per cent for healthcare, 21 per cent for savings, 20 per cent for agricultural needs, 17 per cent for debt repayment, 16 per cent for events like marriages or funerals, 14 per cent for purchasing livestock, 5 per cent for general household needs, 4 per cent for leisure or entertainment, and 1 per cent to start a business.

18. Only the respondents who confirmed sending remittances back home while abroad (1,319 respondents comprising 76% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide the follow up information about remittances.

HOUSING

A significant 65 per cent of respondents indicated that they own houses, while 25 per cent reported living with their parents. Additionally, 5 per cent pay rent for their accommodation, 4 per cent live with their siblings, 1 per cent had other housing arrangements such as living in a dormitory, with friends or relatives. Only less than 1 per cent stated being homeless. Among the respondents who did not own a house[19], the data underscores the prevalent challenges, as lack of financial resources (64%), high housing cost (57%), and low or unsteady income (18%) as the top three challenges to secure permanent housing.

BARRIERS TO PERMANENT HOUSING (%)[19]

Barrier	%
Lack of financial resources	64%
High housing cost	57%
Low or unsteady income	18%
Limited availability of affordable housing	16%
No challenges/ no need to secure a permanent house	9%
Insufficient credit history	7%
Family or personal circumstances	6%
I have my own house but live in a rented house	2%
Legal or documentation issues	1%
Inadequate knowledge of the housing market	1%

HEALTH SERVICES

Ninety-one per cent of the respondents reported having access to health services in Kyrgyzstan. Conversely, 7 per cent stated they do not have any access, while 3 per cent did not provide a response. The primary barriers[20] cited for accessing health services were lack of financial resources (61%) and absence of specialized healthcare professionals (37%). These findings underscore the importance of addressing financial and administrative hurdles to ensure equitable access to health-care for all individuals in Kyrgyzstan.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTH SERVICES (%)[20]

Barrier	%
No money to pay for health services/ high cost of treatment	61%
Lack o healthcare professionals/ bad treatment with patients	37%
Corruption/ requirement for personal connections	27%
Administrative difficulties	20%
Distance to healthcare centre	8%
Do not know where to go for health care services	4%
No medical insurance	4%
Do not know	3%

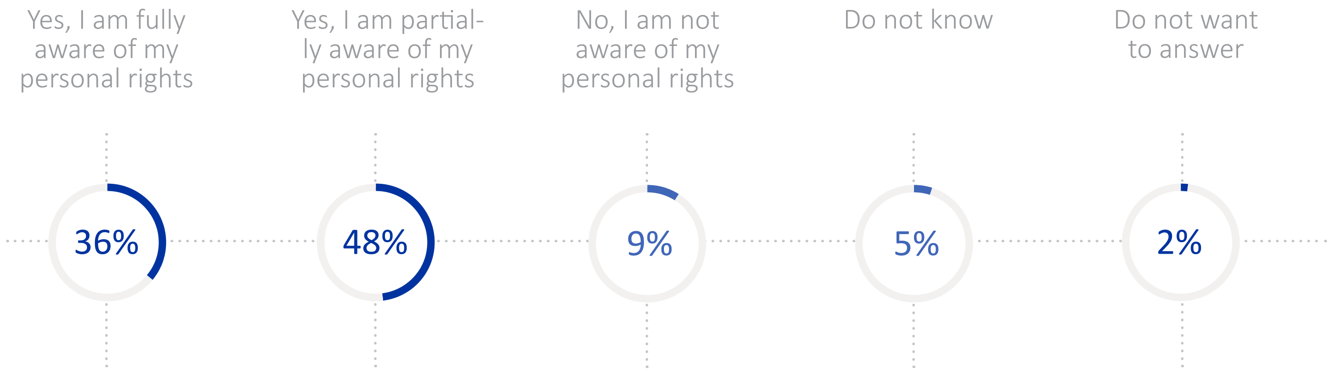
19. Only the respondents who mentioned not having a permanent house (603 respondents comprising 35% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about barriers to permanent housing.
20. Only the respondents who mentioned not having access to health services (119 respondents comprising 7% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide information about barriers to accessing health services.

INFORMATION ABOUT RIGHTS AND LOCAL RE-INTEGRATION

Eighty-four per cent of respondents reported feeling either partially or completely informed about their rights concerning key aspects of life in Kyrgyzstan, including employment, housing, education, personal safety, identity documents, and legal status. This reflects a high level of awareness among return migrants.

However, 9 per cent of respondents felt they were not well-informed about their rights, indicating potential gaps in access to information or resources. An additional 5 per cent stated they were unsure about their level of knowledge, and 2 per cent declined to answer.

INFORMATION ABOUT PERSONAL RIGHTS (%)

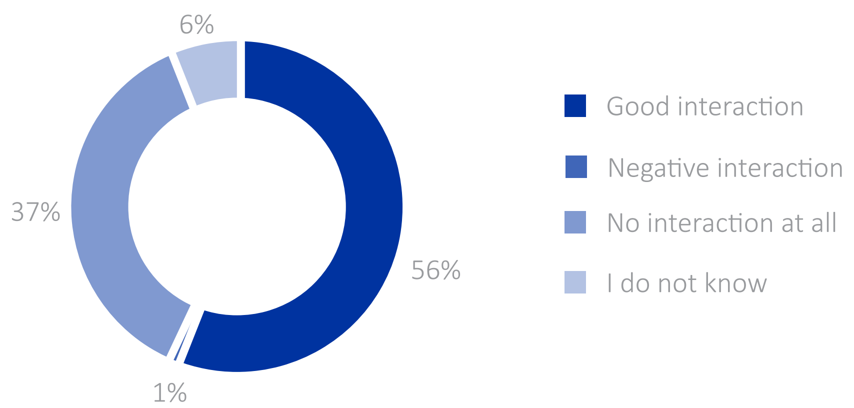


RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN KYRGYZSTAN

When it comes to relationships with the migrant community in Kyrgyzstan, 56 per cent of respondents described their interactions as positive, reflecting a sense of belonging or support within the community. However, 37 per cent of respondents reported having no interaction with the migrant community, suggesting that a significant portion of return migrants may be isolated from these social networks. A further 6 per cent were uncertain about their engagement with the community, while only 1 per cent reported negative interactions with other migrants.

These findings highlight both the strengths and challenges of reintegrating into society after returning to Kyrgyzstan, with many returnees feeling well-informed and positively connected, while others face informational and social gaps.

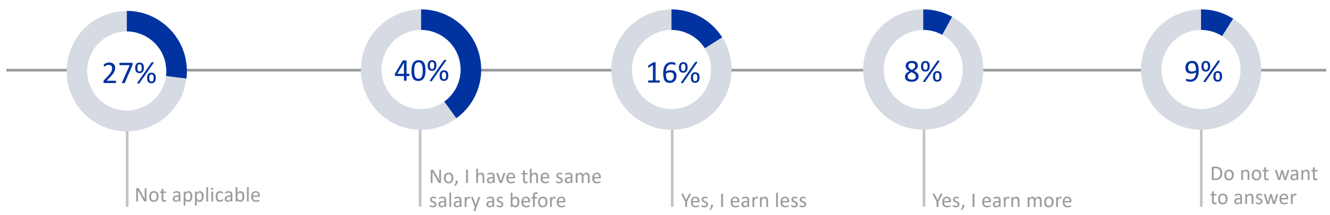
RELATIONSHIP WITH MIGRANT COMMUNITY (%)



SANCTIONS IMPACT

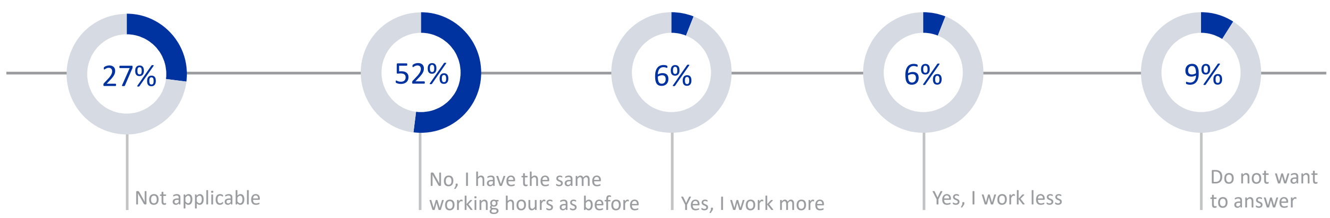
A substantial 40 per cent of respondents reported that their salaries remained unchanged despite the economic sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Twenty-seven per cent mentioned that the sanctions were not relevant/applicable to them, 16 per cent indicated they were earning less, 9 per cent did not want to answer and 8 per cent stated they were earning more.

IMPACTS OF ONGOING ECONOMIC CRISIS ON SALARIES IN KYRGYZSTAN (%)



When asked about the impacts of ongoing economic crisis on any changes in the working hours of respondents in Kyrgyzstan, 52 per cent of respondents stated not experiencing any changes in their working hours as a result of the sanctions, 27 per cent mentioned it was not relevant/applicable to them, 9 per cent of respondents did not want to answer, 6 per cent mentioned working longer and an additional 6 per cent work shorter.

IMPACTS OF ONGOING ECONOMIC CRISIS ON WORKING HOURS IN KYRGYZSTAN (%)



CHALLENGES FACED DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS

When asked if mentioned sanctions affect on respondents' willingness to continue living and working in Kyrgyzstan, 47 per cent stated they felt unaffected. However, an additional 47 per cent acknowledged experiencing some level of impact, and the remaining 6 per cent declined to answer.

When asked about challenges faced over the past six months, 48 per cent of respondents reported encountering no significant obstacles. However, 50 per cent noted facing challenges, with 59 per cent[21] specifically attributing these difficulties to the recent sanctions, and the remaining 2 per cent declining to answer. Among the top challenges reported[21] were increased prices, low wages/insufficient income, unemployment and debt.

21. Only the respondents who confirmed facing challenges in the six months prior to survey (869 respondents comprising 50% of the surveyed individuals) were asked to provide further details about the challenges.

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